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Viewing cable 08KABUL399, TURKS WANT DOSTUM TO STAY QUIET IN THE NORTH,

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08KABUL399**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08KABUL399	2008-02-18 13:07	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Kabul

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.aftenposten.no/spesial/wikileaksdokumenter/article3994738.ece>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 000399
SIPDIS

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STATE FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CRS
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SUBJECT: TURKS WANT DOSTUM TO STAY QUIET IN THE NORTH,

AMBASSADOR PRESSES FOR HIS DEPARTURE

REF: A. KABUL 303

¶B. ANKARA 217

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

Summary

¶11. (C) Turkish Ambassador to Afghanistan Ethem Tokdemir conveyed to the Ambassador February 14 his government's intention to encourage the Afghan Government to permit Dostum to return quietly to the north. Tokdemir passed a copy of his talking points cautioning against actions leading to instability or ethnic tensions and expressing skepticism that Dostum would be willing to leave for Turkey. He confided (protect) that he personally sees the Uzbek strongman as incorrigible and knows him to be in poor health. The Ambassador said sending Dostum back to his stronghold in the North would not help Afghanistan and pressed for his departure. Tokdemir said President Karzai will have the chance to make his case when he meets the Turkish Foreign Minister on February 16 in Qatar.

Turkish Ambassador Advocates Dostum's Quiet Retreat

¶12. (C) Turkish Ambassador to Afghanistan Ethem Tokdemir conveyed to the Ambassador February 14 Turkey's intention to encourage the Afghan Government to permit Dostum to return to the north, where the Turks will encourage him to remain quiet and keep a low profile. Tokdemir passed a copy of his talking points expressing support for Dostum's cooperation against the Taliban, describing him as a partner for stability, cautioning against actions that would lead to instability or ethnic tensions, and expressing skepticism that Dostum would be willing to leave for Turkey (paragraph 7). Tokdemir said the Turkish Foreign Minister hopes to meet with President Karzai on February 16 at a conference in Qatar, saying Karzai will have the chance to make his case.

Ambassador Presses to Help Afghanistan, Not Dostum

¶13. (C) The Ambassador said Turkey's strategy in the north is unclear. Turkey appears to be protecting Dostum rather than the Turkic people in the North, who endure raids, criminality, political fractiousness, and a crisis every six months. He acknowledged that supporting action against Dostum would be difficult for Turkey, but if no action is taken the status quo will continue and Dostum will emerge stronger. The U.S. will support whatever Karzai decides, but there is no shortage of reasons to take action against Dostum now.

¶14. (C) Tokdemir confided that he does not necessarily share his government's message. He believes Dostum is incorrigible, recounting that he was drunk at 10 am when he last met the Turkish prime minister, a devout Muslim. Nevertheless, Tokdemir said Dostum is politically isolated and Junbesh party members are trying to convince him to go to the north and stay quiet. Tokdemir planned to tell Dostum that he is "the natural leader of the Turkic people in Afghanistan," but that he has "provoked too many problems." Tokdemir acknowledged Turkey's influence on Dostum, noting that Dostum had said he had interpreted as "an order" Turkey's request to turn off the public protests that had led to the ouster of former Jowzjan governor Juma Khan Hamdard last year. Tokdemir suggested telling Dostum "we've saved you several times in the past" and this is the last time. He asked whether this might be an acceptable temporary solution. Tokdemir added, "I think he will die soon; he is not sound mentally or physically."

¶15. (C) The Ambassador repeated that he was not sure how sending Dostum back to his stronghold in the north would help Afghanistan, especially if he is mentally unstable. Arresting him would cause problems, but there is already a precedent for his departure for Turkey for medical treatment.

Afghan Government Weakened, Considering Options

¶6. (C) Foreign Minister Spanta confirmed for the Ambassador that he talked to the Turks. The Afghan Government would still like to take some action, but it is not clear whether they will go as far as making an arrest. For the moment, it appears that the latest incident has strengthened Dostum and weakened the Afghan Government.

Talking Points Supporting Dostum

¶7. (C) Turkish Ambassador's talking points:

- General Dostum contributed enormously to the fight against Taliban in the past. He is still a prominent actor in the anti-Taliban alliance whose cooperation is indispensable.

- It should also be recalled that Dostum is considered a natural leader by the majority of the Afghan citizens of Turkic origin.

- Dostum is not a threat to the Afghan Government or ISAF. On the contrary he is a "partner for stability", if utilized properly, for these two parties.

- We certainly believe that any action or arrest whatsoever against Dostum will negatively affect the stability of Afghanistan.

- This will inevitably shake the trust of the Turkic people toward the central government.

- Should such an action lead to a skirmish between Afghan security forces and the supporters of Dostum, and if some people, including Dostum, get injured or killed, the people of northern Afghanistan will definitely take to the streets. Such an environment could easily turn into a fertile ground for Taliban exploitation.

- While Afghan and ISAF forces are busy in the southern and southeastern provinces, as well as around Kabul, we do not think it would be wise to lose an ally in the north and alienate a peaceful community.

- I understand from the meeting between our Ambassadors in Kabul that you also share our concerns in this regard. Therefore we would appreciate it if you could kindly share our common concerns with our Afghan friends as well.

- There is one more point I would like to make. It is not easy for me to understand the rationale behind letting Mohammad Akbar Bay free, after all the trouble he has caused.

- One cannot but wonder whether this was an intentional move to disturb Dostum.

- In countries like Afghanistan where many ethnic groups live together, peaceful coexistence is of vital importance for the future of the country. Our main concern is that, an action against Dostum could lead to ethnic tensions that would run the risk of upsetting ethnic harmony in Afghanistan.

- Our priority is the maintenance of stability and ethnic harmony in Afghanistan, rather than defending the practices of Dostum.

- While we do not concur with Dostum's many practices, we still consider him an element of stability for the unity of Afghanistan and a solid partner against Taliban.

- I would like to assure you that we will continue advising Dostum to keep his sanity.

- I do not think he would be willing to come to Turkey at this stage.

WOOD